

What have we learned from the field about the successes and challenges of re-opening schools?

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Background to the Survey

- In many countries, by the beginning of May 2020 **schools had closed in haste** as part of lockdown measures
- COVID-19 had spread through Asia, was particularly rife in Europe but only just penetrating Africa and the Americas
- The value of this survey was to collect perspectives from professionals in the field – **first-hand accounts** of whether/how schools were re-opening in different countries and the successes and challenges of making this happen



Survey Response

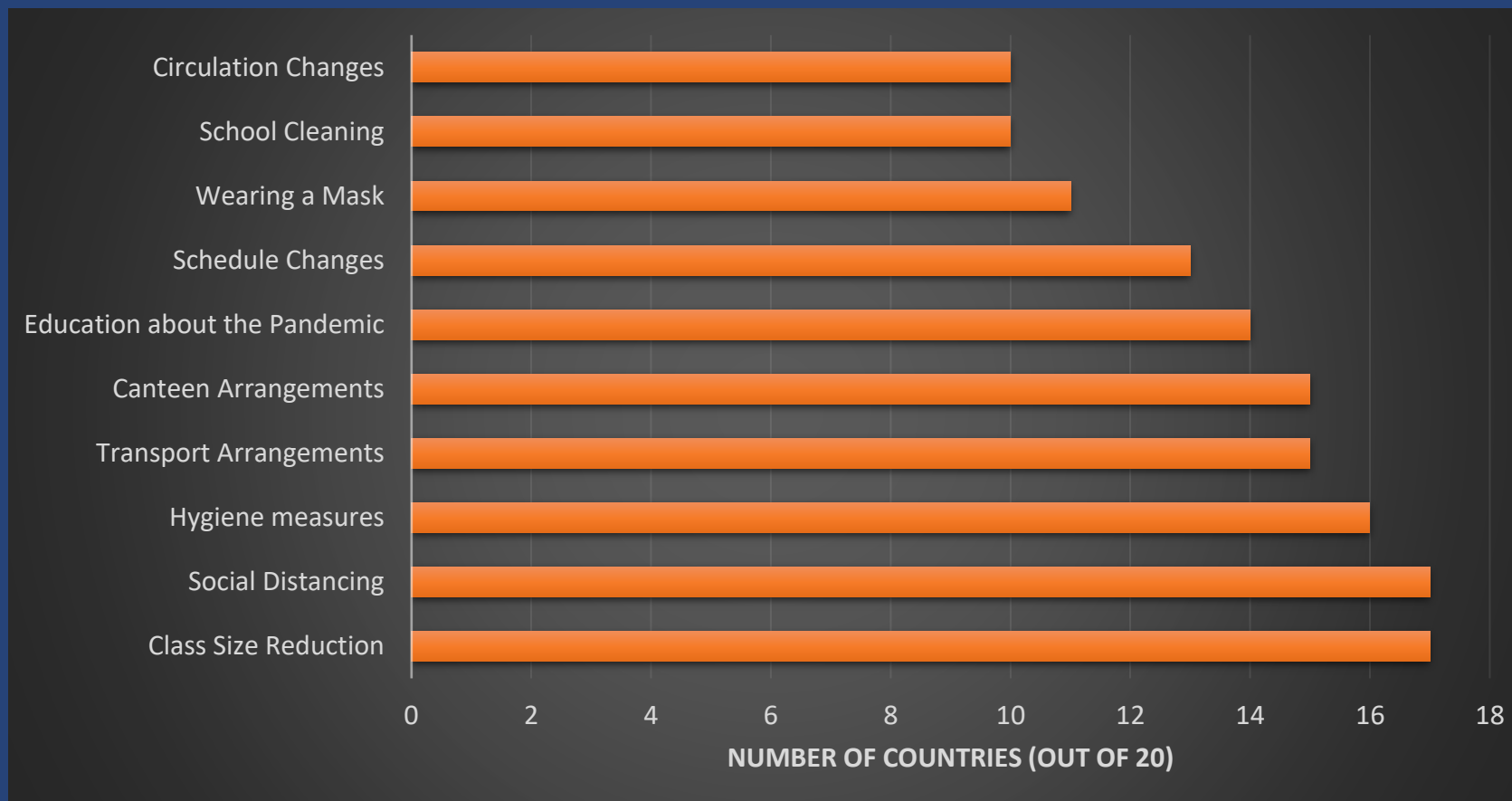


- Access to guidance (20)
- No access (22)
- Schools still open (1)

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Elements of the Guidance



- Most of the countries reported **joint health and education creation** of the guidance
- Ancillary services e.g. **transport** were included

Elements of the Guidance

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS
RULES FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN:

- Wash your hands thoroughly.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or the crook of your arm.
- Stay at home if you experience symptoms.
- Do not share food and drink.

LIMITER LA PROPAGATION DES MICROBES

DÉCOUVRIR LES GESTES SIMPLES QUI PERMETTENT DE LIMITER LA PROPAGATION DE CERTAINES MALADIES.

Définis ce qu'est un microbe :
Un microbe est un

Entoure les gestes ou objets qui peuvent transmettre des microbes :

REUSSIR, ÊTRE BIEN, ÊTRE ENSEMBLE

IASC
Inter-Agency Standing Committee

- Most of the countries reported **joint health and education creation** of the guidance
- Ancillary services e.g. **transport** were included
- Education provided to students about the pandemic included **hand washing, social distancing and the nature of the virus**

Successes

- Symbolism - the country getting back to normal
- No increase in infections nationally (at the point of response)
- **Good teamwork** in schools, with teachers learning fast and being adaptable
- **Good partnerships** and communication between different actors – e.g. schools, families, local authorities and/or unions
- **Clear, consistent guidance** and good adoption of recommended measures
- Provision of the **resources and equipment** needed
- Goodwill, dedication, commitment and trust



Successes

“The political commitment of communities. The creative spirit of teachers and principals. The preparation and anticipation time granted beforehand. The partnership between families and teachers to reflect together on the conditions for recovery. The provision of inspiring and guiding resources. Times of exchange of practice between establishments.” [France]



Challenges

- **Safety concerns and resistance** to reopening – of parents, teachers and unions – leading to significant absenteeism
- **Lack of time** to prepare / lack of resources / lack of equipment
- Logistical issues, including **problems in school premises** and implementation difficulties
- Concerns that **education will suffer** during this period (students often not full-time)
- Contradictory information and communication challenges
- **Mental health problems** and staff fatigue
- Lack of: consultation / local empowerment / trust



Challenges

“Increased disinfection procedures. Managing social distancing in a classroom context (some districts are considering rotating half or fewer students through classrooms on designated days so desks can be spread out). Communicating with parents. Managing school meal programs... Managing mental health issues for students and staff. Keeping staff safe with multiple opportunities for exposure. Finding personal protective equipment for staff.” [USA]



Waiting for Guidance

- Respondents from **20 countries** shared insights or hopes/concerns about what the guidance might contain
- Many countries were providing **public education about the pandemic**, including health literacy initiatives to combat 'fake news'
- Many respondents were keen to re-open schools as they were **concerned about the inequalities in access** to the remote learning alternatives
- Some respondents had **practical concerns** that the guidance would come out just before the planned reopening dates
- They wanted clear and flexible guidance, adapted to the **local** context, and **sharing of good practice**



Waiting for Guidance

*“In most LAC countries, the economic crisis following lock-down will prevent many families that are already stressed from sending kids back to school, they will enter the informal market. Particularly secondary school age adolescents.”
[Latin America & the Caribbean]*

“Clear adaptable guidelines, roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, as well as checklists will help a lot in planning reopening of schools. A compendium of good practices from places where schools have already reopened will be of great help to those who are planning to open in coming months.” [India]



Reflections

- Guidance available for re-opening schools prioritises health and hygiene measures
- **Co-operation between local stakeholders is vital for success**
- Scarce mention of local health providers
- **Concern about widening inequalities in education**
- Availability of resources is variable
- **Sharing of good practice is needed**



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